

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12772

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, TH

SUBJECT: THAI DEFENSE MINISTER SA-NGAT DENOUNCES ELEMENTS
WHO SPREAD RUMORS OF POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

1. IN COMMENTS TO PRESS JUNE 10, WHICH WERE CARRIED IN BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS MORNING OF JUNE 11 THAI DEFENSE MINISTER, ADMIRAL SA-NGAT CHALOYU, SAID THAT AN INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO IDENTIFY THE "ILL-INTENTIONED ELEMENTS" WHICH SPREAD RUMORS OF A POLITICAL UPHEAVAL DURING THE PAST WEEK. SA-NGAT SAID HE KNEW THE IDENTITY OF SOME OF THOSE WHO ENGINEERED THE RUMORS WHICH HE SAID WERE SPREAD BY THOSE, "WHO WANT TO GAIN BACK THEIR INFLUENCE AND RETURN TO POWER." HE ALLEGED THAT THESE ELEMENTS, WHOM HE DID NOT RPT NOT IDENTIFY BY NAME, HAD TELEPHONED TO MANY PLACES, SPREADING UNFOUNDED STORIES THAT VARIOUS CABINET MINISTERS HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED OR THAT TROOPS HAD LAID SEIGE TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE (OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER).

2. REFERRING TO THE VISIT OF A GROUP OF "YOUNG TURK" OFFICERS WHO CALLED ON ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, GENERAL SOEM NA NAKHON SOME DAYS AGO (A CLEAR REFERENCE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE JUNE 3 EPISODE), SA-NGAT SAID HE DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THE OFFICERS MAKING THE VISIT, EXCEPT THAT THE TIME OF THEIR CALL WAS RATHER LATE AT NIGHT. HE SAID THE OFFICERS HAD TRIED TO DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE GOVERNMENT, "BUT SOMETIMES OUR EFFORTS ARE UNDERMINED BY CERTAIN ELEMENTS WHO WANT TO GAIN BACK THEIR INFLUENCE AND TO EXPLOIT IT FOR PERSONAL GAIN."

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SA-NGAT SAID HE SAW NO RPT NO REASON WHY THE PRESENT CABINET SHOULD UNDERGO A RESHUFFLE. HE ADDED, "IF THE CABINET IS TO BE RESHUFFLED, THEN I THINK I SHOULD BE THE FIRST ONE TO GO BECAUSE THERE ARE QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WHO WOULD LOVE TO TAKE UP THE PORTFOLIO." HE CONTINUED, "BESIDES, THE PEOPLE WHO WANT THE CABINET TO BE RESHUFFLED MUST STATE CLEARLY WHICH MINISTERS HAVE DONE SOMETHING SO WRONG AS TO JUSTIFY THEIR REPLACEMENT."

4. COMMENT: SA-NGAT'S REMARKS MAY BE READ AS AN EFFORT TO RE-ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF THE CABINET, UNDER ATTACK BY FIELD GRADE OFFICERS IN THE ARMY OVER THE PAST WEEK OR SO. WE DO NOT RPT NOT ANTICIPATE THAT ANYTHING WILL COME OF THE INVESTIGATION TO WHICH SA-NGAT REFERRED, AS THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES INVOLVED ARE WELL AWARE OF THE FACTS SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST WEEK. THAI MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH SPECULATION REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS, AND AN INVESTIGATION WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE THE WHOLE THAI GOVERNMENT. SA-NGAT'S LINE OF COMMENT, IF CONTINUED, COULD BE DESTABILIZING IF HE EMPHASIZES THE POINTS HE MADE TO THE PRESS JUNE 10. SA-NGAT'S IMMEDIATE REACTION TO THE EVENTS OF JUNE 3 WAS REPORTEDLY THAT THE OFFICERS CONCERNED SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED AND/OR PUNISHED FOR THEIR ACTIONS. HE HAS EVIDENTLY MODERATED HIS VIEWS IN THIS CONNECTION, BUT HE HAS REMINDED THE OFFICERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS THAT HE IS IN A POSITION TO MAKE THEM SWEAT A LITTLE IF THEY CONTINUE A MORE OR LESS OPEN ATTACK ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT.

5. NUMEROUS THAI WILL READ SA-NGAT'S REFERENCE TO ELEMENTS "WHO WANT TO GAIN BACK THEIR INFLUENCE AND TO EXPLOIT IT FOR PERSONAL GAIN" AS AIMED AT FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIAN. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION AMONG THE BANGKOK DIPLOMATIC CORPS--BUT NO RPT NO HARD INFO--THAT PRAPHAT HAS SPENT MONEY TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF ARMY BATTALION COMMANDERS THAT OCCUPY KEY POSITIONS IN THE EVENT OF A COUP. SA-NGAT HAS TOUCHED THIS POINT LIGHTLY BUT POLITELY. WHITEHOUSE

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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